

Japan firms urged to join hands in SEZ projects

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ALLAYING concerns over land acquisition problems in the country, Indian businesses have asked Japanese firms to make investment and forge technological tie-ups in special economic zones during their week-long visit to Tokyo, Osaka and Yokohama.

At a conference in Tokyo last week, Japan-India business co-operation committee standing committee chairman Yoshihiro Watanabe expressed concerns that land acquisition in India can take long time for doing businesses there.

To remove apprehensions in Japanese minds, L B Singhal, director general of the Export Promotion Co-uncil of EOUs and SEZs, said land has been acquired for 568 SEZs that have been approved in India. Of this, 315 zones have been notified also, Singhal said. "Notified means that after acquisition of land, the developers have completed all formalities required to make these SEZs operational and they are on the verge of starting their operations," he said, adding that 91 SEZs have started operations. The business delegation, led by Assocham president Sajjan Jindal, included representatives from real estate firm Raheja Developers, SEZ developers Sri City, Maharashtra Airport Development Company, Assam Company, Oil Field Warehouse and Services, AEZ Infratech, SKIL Infrastructure, JVL Agro Industries and Bengal Integrated Auto Industrial Park.

In Osaka, Isao Yokoi, advisor of Overseas Vocational Training Association, said out of India, Bangladesh and Australia, he found business environment most difficult in India.

"My experience in these countries tell me this," Yokoi, who had stayed in India for 17 years, said.